

What Is Claimed Is:

1 1. A method for providing a shared window for entering commands
2 into a local computer system, wherein the shared window can be shared with a
3 remote user who can input data into the shared window from a remote computer
4 system subject to access control, the method comprising:
5 receiving a command from the remote user on the remote computer
6 system;
7 wherein the command is directed toward the local computer system in
8 order to operate the local computer system;
9 passing the command through a filtering process;
10 if the command passes the filtering process, executing the command on the
11 local computer system;
12 displaying the command on the shared window on the local computer
13 system so that a local user can view the command; and
14 allowing the command to be displayed on a remote copy of the shared
15 window on the remote computer system, so that the remote user can view the
16 command.

1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein if the shared window is in an
2 approval mode, the filtering process involves:
3 allowing the local user of the local computer system to approve the
4 command; and
5 if the local user approves the command, allowing the command to pass the
6 filtering process.

1 9. The method of claim 1, further comprising receiving a second
2 command from a second remote user on a second remote computer system.

1 10. The method of claim 1, wherein the filtering process takes place on
2 at least one of:

3 the remote computer system;

4 the local computer system; and

5 a shared server that is separate from the remote computer system and the
6 local computer system.

1 11. The method of claim 1, wherein the command is in the form of
2 character input.

1 12. The method of claim 1, wherein the command is in the form of an
2 action applied to a graphical user interface.

1 13. A computer-readable storage medium storing instructions that
2 when executed by a computer cause the computer to perform a method for
3 providing a shared window for entering commands into a local computer system,
4 wherein the shared window can be shared with a remote user who can input data
5 into the shared window from a remote computer system subject to access control,
6 the method comprising:
7 receiving a command from the remote user on the remote computer
8 system;
9 wherein the command is directed toward the local computer system in
10 order to operate the local computer system;

11 passing the command through a filtering process;
12 if the command passes the filtering process, executing the command on the
13 local computer system;
14 displaying the command on the shared window on the local computer
15 system so that a local user can view the command; and
16 allowing the command to be displayed on a remote copy of the shared
17 window on the remote computer system, so that the remote user can view the
18 command.

1 14. The computer-readable storage medium of claim 13, wherein if the
2 shared window is in an approval mode, the filtering process involves:
3 allowing the local user of the local computer system to approve the
4 command; and
5 if the local user approves the command, allowing the command to pass the
6 filtering process.

1 15. The computer-readable storage medium of claim 13, wherein if the
2 shared window is in a view-only mode, no commands received from the remote
3 user are allowed to pass the filtering process.

1 16. The computer-readable storage medium of claim 13, wherein if the
2 shared window is in an execute mode, all commands received from the remote
3 user are allowed to pass the filtering process.

1 17. The computer-readable storage medium of claim 13, wherein if the
2 shared window is in a safe command mode, commands from a pre-specified list of
3 safe commands are allowed to pass the filtering process.

1 18. The computer-readable storage medium of claim 17, wherein if the
2 shared window is in a safe command mode and the command is not from the pre-
3 specified list of safe commands, the method further comprises:

4 allowing the local user of the local computer system to approve the
5 command; and

6 if the local user approves the command, allowing the command to pass the
7 filtering process.

1 19. The computer-readable storage medium of claim 13, wherein
2 commands from different users appear in different colors on the shared window.

1 20. The computer-readable storage medium of claim 13, wherein
2 allowing the command to be displayed on the remote copy of the shared window
3 on the remote computer system involves sending an update for the shared window
4 from the local computer system to the remote computer system, wherein the
5 update includes the command.

1 21. The computer-readable storage medium of claim 13, wherein the
2 method further comprises receiving a second command from a second remote user
3 on a second remote computer system.

1 22. The computer-readable storage medium of claim 13, wherein the
2 filtering process takes place on at least one of:

3 the remote computer system;

4 the local computer system; and

5 a shared server that is separate from the remote computer system and the
6 local computer system.

1 23. The computer-readable storage medium of claim 13, wherein the
2 command is in the form of character input.

1 24. The computer-readable storage medium of claim 13, wherein the
2 command is in the form of an action applied to a graphical user interface.

1 25. An apparatus that provides a shared window for entering
2 commands into a local computer system, wherein the shared window can be
3 shared with a remote user who can input data into the shared window from a
4 remote computer system subject to access control, the apparatus comprising:
5 a receiving mechanism that is configured to receive a command from the
6 remote user on the remote computer system;
7 wherein the command is directed toward the local computer system in
8 order to operate the local computer system;
9 a filtering mechanism that is configured to pass the command through a
10 filtering process, and to execute the command on the local computer system if the
11 command passes the filtering process; and
12 a display mechanism that is configured to display the command on the
13 shared window on the local computer system so that a local user can view the
14 command;
15 wherein the display mechanism is configured to allow the command to be
16 displayed on a remote copy of the shared window on the remote computer system,
17 so that the remote user can view the command.

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1 31. The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the display mechanism is
2 configured to display commands from different users in different colors on the
3 shared window.

1 32. The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the display mechanism is
2 configured to send an update for the shared window from the local computer
3 system to the remote computer system, wherein the update includes the command.

1 33. The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the receiving mechanism is
2 configured to receive a second command from a second remote user on a second
3 remote computer system.

1 34. The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the filtering mechanism is
2 located on at least one of:
3 the remote computer system;
4 the local computer system; and
5 a shared server that is separate from the remote computer system and the
6 local computer system.

1 35. The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the command is in the form of
2 character input.

1 36. The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the command is in the form of
2 an action applied to a graphical user interface.